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## BOOK REVIEWS

MENNO SIMONS; HIS LIFE, LABORS, AND TEACHINGS. JOHN HORSCH. The Mennonite Publishing House. Scottdale, Pa. 1916. Pp. 324.

GLEANINGS FROM OLD SHAKER JOURNALS. CLARA E. SEARS. The Houghton Mifflin Co. 1916. Pp. xiv, 298. \$1.25.

To render original sources accessible is to confer an obligation not only upon scholars but upon all intelligent readers. Such a service, in widely different fields, the authors of these two books claim to have rendered. Mr. Horsch says in his Preface: "Menno Simons is perhaps today the most neglected of the prominent leaders in the history of the Christian Church. Neither in the English nor the German language is a book on his life and teachings available." This is perhaps overstating the fact. For his writings are published in English and in German by the Mennonite Publishing Co. at Elkhart, Ind.; and on the supposed tercentenary in 1861 of Simons's death, *Gedankenblätter*, a selection in German from his writings, was published at Dantzic under the editorship of J. Mannhardt. Among the books in Dutch is *Menno Simons, eene Levensschetzel* (1892); and on one important department of the subject is Daniel J. Cassel's *History of the Mennonites from the Time of their Emigration to America* (1888).

Menno Simons was born, probably in 1496, in Friesland. His second name signifies merely that he was the son of Simon, and his followers therefore properly take their designation from his Christian name. For twelve years he was a priest of the Church; but on hearing of the execution in 1530 of Sikke Frerichs for having been baptized when an adult, he came to the conclusion from studying the Scriptures that there was no ground in them for infant baptism. Here, as so often, a martyr was a good advertisement. Menno had before this been interested in Luther's books, and now strode on beyond Luther. "Neither Luther nor Zwingli questioned the validity of Roman Catholic sacraments and ordination. If infant baptism was unscriptural and invalid, the Lutheran and Zwinglian reformation was clearly inadequate. . . . A regeneration or renewing of the Church along New Testament lines was in order. The restoration of scriptural baptism was in fact the most funda-

mental requirement for a true New Testament Church" (Horsch, p. 23). Adult baptism emphasized individualism, and carried with it therefore the independence of each congregation of believers and a sharp separation from the unbaptized, the great majority, of "the world." To many of the world's favorite customs the Mennonites were opposed — to oaths trivial or legal, to war, and they were the first to protest against slavery. They opposed a State Church, and therefore hated both the Roman Catholic and the Lutheran Churches. Basing themselves upon the Scriptures, they practised foot-washing; while in the seventeenth century a body of them in Switzerland came to the conclusion that the use of buttons and of the razor might imperil salvation. They took pains to prevent themselves from being confused with John of Leyden's Münsterites, but by the indiscriminating they were identified with them and were slaughtered accordingly. In the latter part of the sixteenth century they touched England through Amsterdam, where Thomas Helwys joined them with his congregation of Brownists; though afterwards he and his friends left them and called themselves Baptists. The separation in the modern world of Church and State, the assertion of the liberty of conscience and of the continuity of revelation, are mainly due not to orthodox Protestantism but to the heretical sects, of which the Anabaptists, including the Mennonites, were the chief.<sup>1</sup> In 1683 the Mennonites bought 8,000 acres of land from William Penn, and founded Germantown. Their chief home is now in the United States, where they report 80,000 members out of a world-membership of 250,000. Their original tenets in regard to discipline, bearing arms, and civil office are now abolished. In addition to an interesting historical sketch of Menno, Mr. Horsch gives 76 pages of extracts from his works illustrative of his system of doctrine, a complete list of his published works and letters, and a dozen pages of bibliography.

Miss Sears claims, not like Mr. Horsch priority in presentation of subject, but originality of matter. "Hesitatingly at first but with increasing confidence, I was permitted to pore over cherished records of the past and worn-out journals and touching books of verses. These are kept in hidden cupboards where the curious cannot find them" (p. xii). Her book gives a history of the Shaker Movement based on hitherto unpublished records of the Shakers in Harvard, Mass., and contains valuable extracts from those records.

The Shakers, whose name for themselves is "The United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Appearing," originated in France at

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Troeltsch's *Protestantism and Progress*; tr. by W. Montgomery, pp. 104, 122.

the close of the seventeenth century, when Jean Cavalier established the society known as the Camisards. They proclaimed the near approach of God's kingdom on earth and the necessity therefore of repentance and amendment. The contemplation of these mighty subjects produced in them tremblings, faintings, paroxysms, clairvoyance, prophesying, gifts of tongues, healing — all the manifestations which have always attended absorption in the Divine. Established religion treated these claimants to direct inspiration as was the custom, and as it had treated the Mennonites: it proceeded to send them to the stake and the wheel. Then Cavalier escaped to England, where by 1705 he had three or four hundred "prophets" stirring the country with the warning that the acceptable year of the Lord was at hand. Lack of organization, however, retarded the Movement, till it was taken up by two Quakers, James Wardley and his wife, who in 1747 founded in Manchester a Society of 30 persons. These agreed in the conviction that the Christ-spirit "would again appear on this earth, but this time it would be in the personality of a woman. Their argument was that God, being eternal spirit, must combine in Himself all the positive or masculine qualities of Power, Justice, Truth, Knowledge, and Might, and the negative or feminine qualities of Mercy, Loving-kindness, and Forgiveness as well, and that as He had revealed His Spirit through Man, so He must also reveal it through Woman, in order to complete the full revelation of His Divine Nature. With this expectation firmly established, they eagerly awaited its fulfilment; and they believed they found the fulfilment complete in the person of Ann Lee, who united herself to the Society in 1758" (p. 8).

After experiencing the usual persecutions, they migrated to America in 1774 and established themselves at Watervliet near Albany, N.Y. They combined religious fervor and "manifestations" with excellence in farming, and these qualities aroused both hostility and admiring adhesion. After half a dozen years they felt a missionary call toward New England, for Mother Ann had seen in England a vision of faces in the east turned to her in expectation. So a delegation set out to locate the promised land, and finally fixed it in Harvard, Mass. Here, from 1781 to the death of Mother Ann in 1784, was the classic period of Shakerism. They rejected marriage, baptism, and the Lord's Supper. They practised a strict discipline, renunciation of "the world," manual work for all, communism of property, government by appointed Elders. Their worship consisted in marching and singing, which developed into jumping, dancing, whirling, falling prostrate, speaking with

"tongues." "Others," said an intelligent visitor from "the world," "will be shooing and hissing evil spirits out of the house; all in different tunes, groaning, jumping, laughing, talking and stuttering, shooing, and hissing, that makes a perfect bedlam" (p. 60). These exercises were not confined to their meeting-house. "At dawn, at midday, in the twilight, at the moon-rise, a traveller on the country roads around Harvard would see women and men, sometimes in groups according to sex, sometimes a single figure, whirling past him, dancing with rhythmic shaking of heads, arms, and hands. Fear and superstition gripped the hearts of the beholders, and they were wont to flee precipitately" (p. 61). It was the importation into modern Protestantism of the methods of Oriental dervishes. Before auto-suggestion, hypnotism, thought- and power-transference were understood, those who possessed these abilities considered them as proofs that they were directly inspired by God, and others either believed with reverence or regarded these manifestations as of the devil. Hard-headed New England took, in the main, the latter view, and, as the stake and the wheel had become illegal, had to content itself with arrests, mobs, whippings, and banishment.

Mother Ann Lee had, like Mrs. Eddy, ruled her Church with a strong hand. After her death Elder James Whitaker kept the Society together for three years, when Elder Joseph Meacham, upon whom Mother Ann had entailed the succession, became its head. He and Eldress Lucy Wright gathered the Church again in Harvard in 1791. In this, its second period, its organization became closer and its peculiar characteristics were modified. A shuffling march became its usual ritual, though the older members could not restrain themselves at times from leaping and dancing. The hostility against the Shakers diminished as their extravagances declined and their farm-produce increased. The genuineness of their piety and the excellence of their apple-sauce came to be recognized and brought them kindly toleration. But celibacy, which prevented growth from within, the tendency in the world away from "herb-doctoring" towards a more scientific medical theory, the development of farming on a large scale by machinery, the growth of millenarian views elsewhere, all combined to steer the Society into a back-water, and modern life passed it by, leaving still about a thousand Shakers in small settlements now scattered through the United States.

In studying the Shaker Movement one is impressed, as in the case of so many of the smaller religious sects, with the poverty of intellectual outlook from which it sprang. Yet it must be remembered that when it arose, Biblical Criticism had not begun to replace the

theory of verbal inspiration with the idea of progressive revelation. In treating the words of the Bible as literal, infallible, and ultimate, the Shakers did only what almost all the other Christians of their time were doing. But what they drew from their study of the Bible — the characteristic tenet of the nearness of Christ's Second Advent — was taken up in the first third of the nineteenth century by the more energetic hands of William Miller; and among the 50,000 who in 1843 stood in their white robes ready to ascend at the Lord's appearing, there were doubtless many who, if they had lived a generation earlier, would have been attracted by Shakerism.

Among the valuable features of Miss Sears's book are the vivid descriptions of the mobs which attacked the Shakers, the music and words of many of the Shaker hymns, together with ample data of the farm-produce and especially of the herb-department. For a fuller view of what the Shakers say of themselves, the book needs to be supplemented by such works as *Testimonies to the Precepts of Mother Ann Lee, Collected from Living Witnesses; Shakerism, its Meaning and Message*, by Anna White and Leila S. Taylor; and especially *Shaker Sermons, Containing the Substance of Shaker Theology*, by Bishop Henry L. Eads.

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LUTHER AND LUTHERDOM. From Original Sources by Heinrich Denifle. Translated from the Second Revised Edition of the German by RAYMUND VOLZ. Vol. I, Part 1. Torch Press. Somerset, Ohio. 1917. Pp. lii, 465.

To call, with Gooch, "Denifle's eight hundred pages hurled at the memory of the Reformer among the most repulsive books in historical literature," is not a bit too strong. That the author's feelings were so immensely enlisted would not matter if the man only had a spark of the candor and real desire to be fair that distinguishes the work of scholars like Pastor and Acton. But Denifle's mind was so warped by hatred that, while preternaturally sharp-sighted in detecting the slightest faults of Luther or the most trivial errors of modern Protestant scholars, he was, to the larger aspects of his subject, portentously blind. *Luther and Lutherdom* is a learned and elaborate libel.

Let us take a single example of its famous "method." The Dominican asserts that Luther set aside all prohibitions of consanguineous marriages, even that of parent and child and of brother and sister (p. 324). Any other scholar, in making so startling a charge, would